

## 2009 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-S-22TX

**Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:**

State: \_\_\_\_\_Texas\_\_\_\_\_

Assign Program Category (applicant): Environmental Protection (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: ePermitting Storm Water General Permit
2. Administering Agency: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
3. Contact Person (Name and Title): L'Oreal Stepney
4. Address: 12100 Park 35 Circle, Austin, Texas 78753
5. Telephone Number: 512-239-1321
6. FAX Number: 512-239-4114
7. E-mail Address: lstepney@tceq.state.tx.us
8. Web site Address: <https://www6.tceq.state.tx.us/steers>
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program. The ePermits system allows electronic submittal and approval of storm water permit applications.
10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 2, 2009 to be considered. February 2008
11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? To reduce permit application processing time for regulated customers so they can focus on and move forward with conducting business in Texas.  
When a general permit is renewed, as the Construction General Permit Notice of Intent was in 2008, it requires everyone authorized who wish to continue authorization to renew their permit within a short time frame (usually 90 days). The construction general permit included a total of 22,000 existing permits at the time it was renewed, so the agency needed a streamlined method for handling the anticipated heavy workload. In addition, the agency receives approximately 1,000 applications per month under two general permits. This system allows these applications to be submitted electronically, reducing workloads for manual reviews.  
Another issue the system addresses is reducing the time and resources needed for the permitting programs to add additional permit applications with little specialized coding.
12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.
  - a. Project Initiation: September 2005
  - b. High-level architecture and Java/WebSphere technology decision: October 2005
  - c. Automated ColdFusion-based system for storm water permits: August 2006
  - d. Internal System Release: December 2006
  - e. Java/WebSphere Release for Storm Water General Permits: February 2008
  - f. Upgrade Release for Storm Water Construction General Permit Renewal: March 2008
13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? The majority of applications received and processed by the agency are done via paper. ePermits provides a method for electronic submittal and processing of applications without any manual intervention.
14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.) Total cost for FY06 through 3/31/08 of FY08 was \$667,355 for contractors to assist with development. In addition staff from OAS and OPR worked significant hours overseeing and completing project tasks as the technical lead.
15. What are the program's annual operational costs? The system is maintained by internal agency staff.
16. How is the program funded? Appropriations from the state legislature.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number. No.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

ePermits is a Java enterprise application designed, built, and maintained in-house by TCEQ employees. Agency developers designed and coded for the two systems using requirements gathered and created by program area business analyst staff members using IBM's Rational RequisitePro. The development team used the Rational application development tools. The two systems and the Texas Driver's License authentication web service are deployed on a multiple server, clustered application server infrastructure.

The system utilizes web services and proxies provided by other agency systems and developers to complete the security, pay and submit processes. All final, submitted data is saved to Oracle backend databases using proxies and web services that adhere to agency business data requirements.

The two ePermits J2EE systems implement the following technologies: JSF, Hibernate, EJB, XML, SOAP, Java, ORM, JSP, Servlets and web services.

The system was created to be ADA 508 compliant and to meet federal Environmental Protection Agency Cross-Media Electronic Reporting Regulation requirements.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address. While other states may be receiving electronic submittal of storm water applications, TCEQ developed an ePermits system written specific to the needs of our storm water program, however, the system is designed to allow for other permit types to be added.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? Yes, the state of New Jersey provides electronic submittal for the storm water program which includes a manual review of data in a staging area before final processing.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken? Yes for storm water. The agency is preparing to expand use of the system to other permit types.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples. Permit processing time frames have been reduced by the increased number of applications submitted and processed for approval electronically. Since implementing the new ePermits system, at least 50 percent of the storm water applications have been submitted electronically. With the reduction in paper submittals, staff members have more time to focus on other environmental issues.

Customers regulated under the construction and industrial general permits benefit economically by reducing the time it takes to get approval from TCEQ. A customer can obtain coverage within 30 minutes. This expedites the start of new construction and industrial businesses in Texas.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? The system has been enhanced to further improve quality of incoming data and usability. Staff are working to include the next permit type.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program? The system design must be approved by EPA to ensure the federal electronic reporting requirements are met. To provide the ability for electronic signature of a participation agreement, the states must use a third party validation source that meets the federal requirements. Outreach and marketing of the system to the appropriate audience are critical to achieve successful implementation.